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ISAAC VAN OSTADE.

ISAAC VAN OSTADE was the brother of the celebrated Adrian Van Ostade, and was born at Lubeck, in 1613. Both the brothers, when very young, were sent into the Low Countries, where the eldest studied under François Hals, in whose school Brouwer was a contemporary, and where they contracted a most intimate friendship. Adrian is supposed to have been the instructor of his brother Isaac; but little is known of their early history. Soon they separated, and never afterwards were they found in any close connexion. Adrian dwelt in the city of Harlaem; Isaac travelled to the banks of the Zuyder Zee, and finally settled at Amsterdam. He died in 1671; his brother lived a few years longer, long enough to see the French victorious in the neighbourhood of his country, and threatening to destroy the independence of Holland proper.

Speaking of Isaac Van Ostade, Houbraken says, "He terminated his career after having attained the summit of art." This is great praise. But Isaac was a special favourite, a prophet that was honoured in his own country. One says, "He was in no way inferior to his brother; he designed with the utmost care, and was the king of light and shadow." It has been argued on the other side of the question, that the disparities in the painting of Isaac and Adrian are easily perceptible; that in the former the touch is very different, the transparency abundantly less, the pencilling not near so delicate; nor can they either in force, warmth, or spirit, admit of being compared with the paintings of the latter. But although there may be some truth in this, the pictures of Isaac Van Ostade are deserving of much praise.

Adrian and Isaac resemble each other in their style of painting and in the choice of their subjects. But still, to a close observer, the peculiarities of each are apparent. The first painted the interior of cottages, drinking-houses, and similar scenes; the other represented out-of-door life, streets, and fields, and bridges, and canals, and busy groups, chattering, gossiping, laughing,—forming a *coup d'œil* of no common interest. The picture, from which the engraving is taken which we now present to our readers, is particularly characteristic of the style of Isaac Van Ostade. It represents a halt of travellers before a roadside inn. The landscape is well arranged and remarkably natural. The tree in the foreground, not overloaded with foliage, is a perfect study in itself; and the avenue at the back of the picture, where the two cavaliers are riding, is tastefully designed and gracefully finished. A quiet, comfortable-looking place is the hostel, with its gable front toward us, and the vehicle that stands before the door, and the tired horses with their heads bent forward, and the stooping figure of the hostler who has brought the cool refreshing

water, and the group within and about the cart, and the dogs, all life and motion, united together, show us that no common hand designed the sketch. It is natural. Boucher and Lancret might complain that nature was too green, and wanted harmony; but by closely studying nature—nature on the banks of the Zuyder Zee—Ostade has left us some admirable pictures. There is an air of repose over this Flemish halt which is quite in character with the design of the painting. One or two toppers are smoking and drinking beside the door of the inn; towards the front of the picture, a traveller is resting on the ground, his bundle and his stick beside him; on the other side, two are lounging on the rising ground, while another, in an indolent position, is gossiping with them both, and close beside them a dog is lying fast asleep. The sky is calm and clear. Beyond the hostel there is a rich mass of foliage, on which the sunlight falls in all its beauty; and further still away upriseth the steeple of a village church.

He painted several pictures representing winter scenes with admirable effect,—frozen canals, and the people amusing themselves on the ice, were indeed his favourite subjects. They are faithful and well-executed representations of nature, and, deservedly, are held in the highest estimation. Had Isaac Van Ostade been permitted to have had a longer career, he would, doubtless, have rivalled the best masters of the Dutch School; as it was, he reached an eminent rank among the ablest painters of the day. His pictures approach the bold and admirable productions of Albert Cuyp.

A misconception of the abilities of the artist has some times arisen from contrasting his earlier productions with the more finished and elaborate specimens of his brother. Some of these early specimens are indeed slight in execution and brown in colour, and are comparatively of but little value; but his latter paintings competed successfully with those of the best of his contemporaries, and obtained corresponding prices. Bryan says, "These consist of out-door scenes, such as travellers halting at an inn, frozen canals with figures amusing themselves on the ice, and views of Dutch villages. To these he confined himself, but so varied was his treatment of the subject as to obviate the charge of self-imitation. The amateur who possesses one of them may consider himself fortunate; indeed they are now estimated so highly that few besides princes or nobles, or others of equal opulence, can retain them. One in the Duchess de Berri's collection sold, in 1837, for £1,306; the same picture sold in 1801, at Robit's sale, for £361; many others have equally progressed in value." Such of his best pictures as are dated are of the years 1644 to 1649 inclusive.

THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE AT MONROVIA, THE CAPITAL OF LIBERIA.

AMONG the interesting and picturesque scenery on the western coast of Africa, few points present to the traveller greater attractions than the little city of Monrovia, the seat of government of the republic of Liberia; situated near the mouth of the Mesurado river, about four miles south-east of the entrance of the St. Paul's river into the ocean, immediately in the rear of Cape Mesurado, in lat. 6° 19' north. Located on an elevated site, commanding a fine view of the ocean to the west and south, and of the forest-clad hills and mountains of that luxuriant and beautiful country towards the north and east, and containing many comfortable-looking dwelling-houses, interspersed among tropical fruit-trees of almost every variety, it presents an appearance of comfort and refinement among the citizens, and strongly contrasts with the rude hamlets of the uncultivated aborigines in the vicinity.

Less than a third of a century ago, the spot where now

stands this beautiful and flourishing little metropolis was covered with a dense forest, the solemn silence of which was disturbed only by wild animals, or occasionally by human beings apparently scarcely more civilised than their four-footed neighbours. But through the agency of the hardy pioneers of the great African colonisation enterprise, the forest-trees were felled, and temporary places of residence erected; which, from time to time, have been superseded by more elegant and substantial buildings, among which is the mansion-house of his excellency, Joseph J. Roberts, the President of the Republic—a two-story brick house, with the necessary back buildings, located near the centre of the town, immediately opposite the old government-house.

The dwellings of many of the citizens of Monrovia, as well as the presidential mansion, are not only comfortably but elegantly furnished; and some of the residents of this little bustling com-



FLEMISH INN, FROM A PICTURE BY ISAAC VON OSTADE.